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SUBJECT: CZECH CONTRIBUTIONS TO AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. 2006 PRAGUE 1543

¶B. PRAGUE 0557

¶C. IIR 6824 016607 (071214Z JUN 07)

¶11. Summary. This is the third in a series of three cables summarizing significant Czech contributions in Iraq, the Balkans, and Afghanistan. The Czech Republic has provided substantial military support, development, and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. From the military perspective, the Czechs have spent \$36.5 million on military contributions in Afghanistan since 2002, and have budgeted an additional \$16 million for 2007. The Czech government is considering leading a PRT in Logar Province beginning in 2008. The Czech Republic has also contributed over \$15.5 million in development assistance since 2001. Czech development projects focus on education, transportation infrastructure, potable water, agriculture, de-mining, and preservation of cultural heritage. (For a summary of the Czech contributions to Iraq and the Balkans, see Refs A and B.) End summary.

Background

¶12. Support for democracy and human rights is a core principle of Czech foreign policy, and an enduring legacy of the Czech Republic's forty-year struggle against communism. Since the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the Czech Republic has proven itself a reliable U.S. ally in these areas, as well as an important partner in NATO and GWOT, a like-minded ally in the United Nations, and a strong promoter within the EU of the transatlantic relationship.

Military/Security Contributions

¶13. Since 2002, the Czech Republic has spent \$36.5 million in military funding to support international efforts to secure and stabilize Afghanistan by providing troops, experts, weapons, and medical assistance:

-- In 2002, the Czech government sent a military field hospital to Afghanistan (the hospital treated 16,000 people during its mission). The hospital later served in Kuwait and Iraq in 2003 and 2004, and in Pakistan in 2005 as part of the NATO earthquake relief effort.

-- In 2004 and 2006, the Czech government provided 120 Special Operations troops to serve six-month tours under U.S. command. (The Czech MOD spent much of its \$6 million Coalition Support Fund allocation on weapons and equipment for this mission.)

-- Since 2004, the Czech Republic has actively participated

in the NATO-led ISAF mission. (Note: the Czech government allows its forces to operate in Afghanistan without substantive restrictions.)

¶4. Currently, approximately 250 Czech soldiers and experts serve in Afghanistan (likely to increase in 2008):

-- The Czech Republic was the lead nation of the NATO ISAF command structure at Kabul's international airport from December 2006 through March 2007. Approximately 66 Czech personnel continue to provide air traffic control, meteorological, engineering, and de-mining services at the airport. The Czechs also contributed \$240,000 to the ISAF Humanitarian Fund in 2006 and will contribute again in 2007.

-- As part of a PRT near Feyzabad, 82 Czech soldiers protect international units and cooperate with Afghan reconstruction and development efforts. The Czech contingent has a budget of \$200,000 for Quick Impact Projects.

-- In March 2007, the Czech government sent a military field hospital to Kabul for 12 months. The hospital staff includes 82 medical workers, 13 chemical warfare unit members, and three military police. The hospital will provide medical care to NATO troops and the local population. The cost of the mission is \$7.1 million.

-- In April 2007, the Czech government deployed 36 members of the Czech military police's Special Operations Group to work under the UK-led mission in Helman province.

¶5. In a response to a NATO request, the Czech Republic recently agreed to donate 20,000 automatic rifles and 650 machine guns (worth \$1.4 million) to Afghanistan. The Czech government recently donated 12 military helicopters (six

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Mi-24 combat and six Mi-27 transport), which are being refurbished by NATO at a Czech facility. The Czech military is also considering plans to deploy a small number of MI-171 cargo and MI-35 gunship helicopters to Afghanistan in 2009, and may provide helicopter training personnel to assist the Afghanistan National Army.

¶6. The Czech government hopes to create and lead a PRT in Logar Province, beginning in early 2008 (Ref C). The Czech-led PRT would consist of approximately 130 personnel. The government's decision is expected in July 2007.

¶7. The Czech MOD has budgeted \$16.2 million in 2007, which is a significant increase for Czech military efforts in Afghanistan.

Reconstruction & Development

¶8. Since 2003, Afghanistan has been one of the top recipients of Czech MFA development assistance. The goal of Czech development assistance is to improve access to education; develop transportation infrastructure, potable water supplies, and agriculture; and preserve Afghani cultural heritage (for example, providing funds for the rehabilitation of the National Museum). In 2006, the Czech government also provided funds for de-mining, reconstruction of destroyed buildings, and UN projects.

¶9. In total, the Czech government has spent over \$15.5 million for development, reconstruction, and humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan since 2001. Approximately \$870,000 has been budgeted for such assistance in 2007.

GRABER